

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF JULY 4 – July 10, 2016. Report #7

Compiled by George Pappas - (907) 786-3822, George_Pappas@fws.gov
Office of Subsistence Management, USFWS.

The purpose of the weekly fisheries update is to provide the reader with an overall summary of the status of subsistence related fisheries throughout the state of Alaska. The target audience is the Federal Subsistence Board and its Staff Committee. The report was compiled with the assistance of the Federal in-season managers and OSM staff that provided weekly updated information by the close of business on Friday of the reporting week. My goal is to have the report sent by the close of business the following Monday. Web links have been included to provide additional information. You may obtain additional information on a fishery of particular interest by contacting the in-season manager, provided contacts, follow the provided web links, or contact me.

SOUTHEAST ALASKA

Klag Bay - The Sitka Tribe of Alaska operates the Sockeye Salmon monitoring weir at Klag Bay which is operating as of June 28th. As of July 4th, nine Sockeye Salmon have been counted. In 2015, approximately 3,304 Sockeye Salmon migrated past the weir while an estimated 1,344 Sockeye Salmon were harvested in the marine terminal area subsistence and sport fishery. Subsistence harvest accounted for over 99% of terminal area harvest.

Redoubt Lake - The Forest Service operates the Redoubt Lake weir which was operational June 13th. As of July 4th, 2,244 sockeye were counted passing the weir with 188 passing on July 4th. In 2015, an estimated total of 13,379 sockeye passed through the weir into Redoubt Lake.

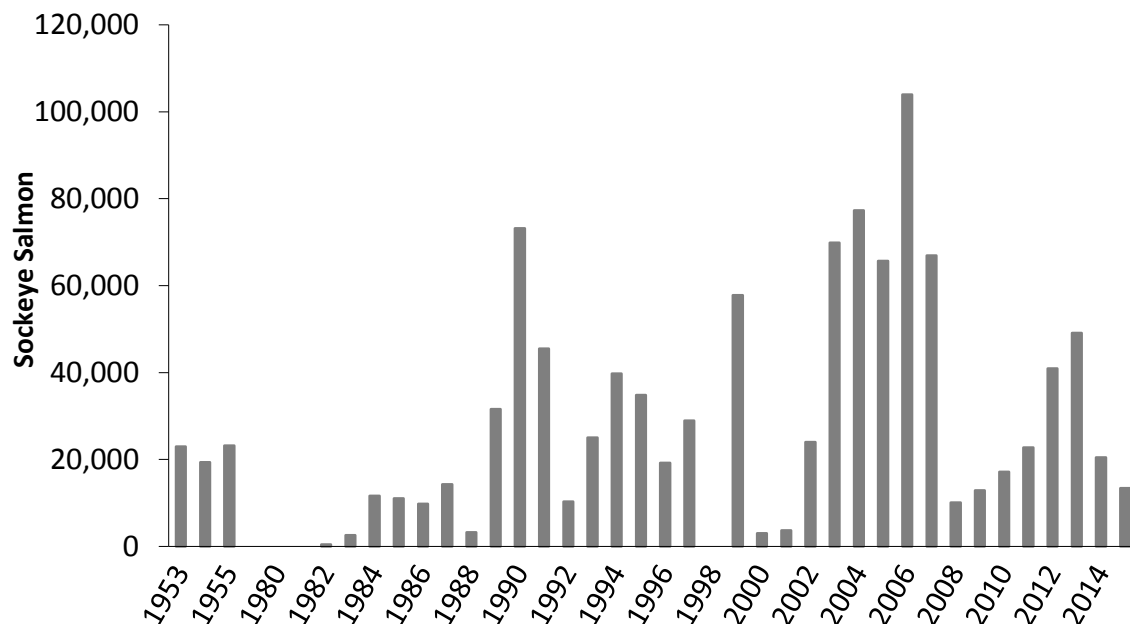


Figure 1. Annual Sockeye Salmon expanded escapement into Redoubt Lake for years with data: 1953 to 1955, 1982 to 1997, and 1999 to 2015. The weir was not operated in 1998.

Falls Lake - The Forest Service and the Organized Village of Kake operate the Falls Lake trap and video net weir which were operating as of July 1st. On July 3rd, nine sockeye were counted at the trap bringing the season total to 22. The final escapement estimate in 2015 was 4,716 sockeye while the final subsistence and sport harvest in the marine terminal area was 1,031. Subsistence harvest accounted for 99% of terminal area harvest.



Figure 2. Employees from the Organized Village of Kake and the Forest Service assemble the fish trap above the fish pass at Falls Lake.

Wrangell/Petersburg Area

There have been 77 fishing permits issued for the Stikine River Federal subsistence salmon fishery. Fishing pressure has been light but expected to increase over the long holiday weekend. Because of the low abundance of Chinook Salmon returning to the Stikine River, many fishers are releasing Chinook Salmon that are captured unharmed.

The estimated cumulative subsistence harvest is 12 Chinook and 430 Sockeye Salmon. Test fishing catches in the northern southeast area, show Pink Salmon and Chum Salmon abundances at very low levels. It is too early in the season to determine whether the returns are less than expected or the timing is later than expected. The summer troll fishery started on July 1. The Southeast Region's Chinook Salmon are allocated as follows:

<u>All-gear</u>	<u>Purse</u>	<u>Drift</u>	<u>Set Gillnet</u>	<u>Total Net</u>	<u>Sport</u>	<u>Troll</u>
<u>Treaty</u>	<u>Seine</u>	<u>Gillnet</u>				
<u>Quota</u>						
355,600	15,291	11,312	1,000	26,603	65,799	263,197

Yakutat, Juneau, and Admiralty areas of Northern Southeast Alaska

Neva Lake. Personnel from the Hoonah Indian Association have been operating a pair of video weirs at the outlet of Neva Lake since June 14. Less than 100 Sockeye Salmon have escaped into the lake to date but counts will climb the next time it rains.



Kook Lake. Personnel from the Angoon Community Association have been operating a pair of video net weirs at the outlet of Kook Lake since June 26. As of July 7, 386 Sockeye Salmon have escaped into the lake.



Sitkoh Lake. A pair of remotely monitored video net weirs were installed at the outlet of Sitkoh Lake on June 30th. No Sockeye Salmon had entered the lake as of July 4.



Prince of Wales and Ketchikan District Area

The 2016 subsistence salmon fishery for Southeast Alaska and Yakutat areas has started. To date, 172 permits have been issued.

Most subsistence Sockeye Salmon fisheries have started with subsistence users fishing marine waters, under State issued permits at Karta, Klawock, and Hetta. Some fishing effort has been noted at Hatchery Creek.

The Hydaburg Cooperative Association projects at both Hetta Lake and Eek Lake are ongoing. No Sockeye Salmon have been counted yet at Eek. There have been 6 Sockeye counted at Hetta to date. The Klawock Lake project began July 1st and there have been 47 Sockeye counted to date.

Commercial seining has started for Chum Salmon in a hatchery terminal area in District 2. Drift gillnet openings are occurring weekly. The summer season commercial troll for Chinook began July 1 summer. Commercial harvest to date is 13,370 Chinook Salmon, 26,325 Sockeye Salmon, 21,000 Coho Salmon, 260,700 Pink Salmon and 465,000 Chum Salmon from Districts 1-4.

Sitka and Hoonah Area – Justin Koller, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest
Justin Koller, (907)747-4297 jpkoller@fs.fed.us

Wrangell/Petersburg Area – Bob Larson, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest
(907) 772-5930, robertlarson@fs.fed.us

Yakutat, Juneau, and Admiralty areas of Northern Southeast Alaska - Ben Van Alen
(907-789-6257; bvanalen@fs.fed.us) and Jake Musslewhite (907-789-6256;
jgmusslewhite@fs.fed.us), Forest Service, **Tongass National Forest**

Prince of Wales and Ketchikan District Area – Jeff Reeves, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest. (907) 826-1649 jreeves@fs.fed.us

Southeast Alaska Web Links

Tongass National Forest News Room <http://www.fs.usda.gov/news/tongass/news-events>

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Southeastern Alaska Area
http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Southeast.pdf

ADF&G Sport and Personal Use Fishing News Release and Emergency Order Link
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/EONR/index.cfm?ADFG=region.R1>

ADF&G Commercial Fisheries News Release and Emergency Order Link
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>

Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Southeast Alaska
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishingReports/index.cfm?ADFG=R1.home>

Statewide ADF&G Fish counts
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/>

SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA

PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND – COPPER RIVER

Copper River – Dave Sarafin, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park/Preserve

As of July 6, 2016 the ADF&G sonar at Miles Lake (located just downstream of the Million Dollar Bridge in the Copper River) estimated that 672,017 salmon had migrated upstream for the season. This estimate is 36% more than the projected escapement of 493,341 for this date, or 178,676 more salmon. A daily estimate of 11,009 salmon migrated by the sonar counter on July 6.

The Chitina Subdistrict is open and is scheduled to remain open through July 10. It is then scheduled to reopen immediately on July 11 and remain open the entire week. The state and federal fisheries usually follow identical fishing schedules which are set by the state. Eighty-five (85) Federal Chitina Subdistrict permits have been issued on the FWS online data base. Additional permits for this subdistrict have been issued in Chitina and Kennecott, NPS ranger stations that do not have internet connectivity.

The Glennallen Subdistrict opened for Federal subsistence users on May 15th and is expected to remain open until September 30th. Two hundred sixty-one (261) Federal Glennallen permits have been issued on the FWS online data base. Additional permits for this subdistrict have been issued in Chitina and Kennecott, NPS ranger stations that do not have internet connectivity. The state subsistence fishery in the Glennallen Subdistrict opened on June 1.

The Batzulnetas fishery is open. No Federal permits have been issued so far.

The Tanada Creek fish weir was installed on June 1. The water level in the creek was extremely low until the drainage received substantial rains in late June. The first salmon reached the weir on June 27; the total count for that day was 82 Sockeye Salmon. The cumulative season counts through July 6 are 2,216 Sockeye Salmon and 1 Chinook Salmon.

As of July 6, 2,497 Chinook Salmon had been tagged at the two project fishwheels in Baird Canyon operated by the Native Village of Eyak. The upriver fishwheels at Canyon Creek have captured 1,040 Chinook Salmon, of which, 166 were recaptured fish that had been tagged at the downstream wheels.

ADF&G's counting tower in the Gulkana River began operation on May 27; two hundred fifty-eight (600) Chinook Salmon have been estimated past the site as of July 6.

Three Special Actions have been issued by the park this season:

- delaying the starting date of the Chitina Subdistrict federal subsistence salmon fishery and setting the tentative pre-season schedule for this fishery.
- amending the preseason schedule for the Chitina Subdistrict for the week of July 4 – July 10, allowing a full week (168 hours) of fishing and providing the tentative schedule for future fishing periods.
- amending the preseason schedule for the Chitina Subdistrict for the week of July 11-17, allowing a full week (168 hours) of fishing

Links

ADF&G Miles Lake daily sonar estimates

http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.salmon_escapement

NVE's Chinook Escapement Monitoring project in the Copper River

<http://eyak.fishscan.com/Summary/DailySummary.aspx>

ADF&G Copper River Inseason Commercial Harvest Estimates

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.harvestsummary>

Gulkana River counting tower – ADF&G

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/index.cfm?ADFG=main.LocSelectYearSpecies>

PWS and Copper River Delta – Milo Burcham, Chugach National Forest, Cordova.
(907) 424-4759 mburcham@fs.fed.us

A total of 53 Federal Subsistence fishing permits have been issued for freshwaters within the Prince William Sound of Chugach National Forest to date. One-hundred and two permits were issued in 2015. Harvest by this year's permit holders will not be known until reports are returned this winter. In 2015, 878 Coho and 172 Sockeye Salmon were reported harvested on Copper River Delta fresh waters in this fishery.

The Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Monday, July 11 for a 36-hour commercial fishing period. Cumulative Miles Lake sonar count through 7/8 was 695,184 fish whereas the anticipated range for this date is 505,961–783,102. The 0600 count for 7/9 was 1,566 fish. For the week ending July 2, the actual Copper River delta survey count was 31,600 Sockeye Salmon versus an anticipated range 28,229–66,722 fish. A preliminary harvest estimate from the 48-hour period that started on Thursday, July 7 is not yet available.

Cook Inlet Area – Jeff Anderson, Field Supervisor, Kenai Fish and Wildlife Field Office (907) 260-0132 Jeffrey_Anderson@fws.gov

Harvest of 707 Sockeye Salmon from the Russian River Falls dip net fishery and 6 Sockeye Salmon in the Kasilof River dip net fishery have been reported through July 7. Harvest of 36 Sockeye Salmon has been reported for the Kasilof River experimental community gillnet fishery through July 7. Totals of 123 Kenai River permits, 34 Kasilof River permits, and 12 Designated Fisher permits have been issued through July 7.

A total of 9,851 early-run Chinook Salmon were counted at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's sonar assessment site at river mile 14 through June 30, which exceeded the optimal escapement goal range of 5,300-9,000. The Department began assessing the late-run Chinook Salmon escapement on July 1, and 1,923 had been counted past the sonar through July 4.

Through July 7, a total of 31,274 early-run Sockeye Salmon have been counted past the Russian River weir. Through July 6, a total of 136,549 late-run Kenai River Sockeye Salmon have been counted past the Department's sonar at river mile 19 and a total of 103,942 Sockeye Salmon have been counted past the Department's sonar on the Kasilof River.

Fish counts at some Department-operated assessment projects are available on-line at <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/index.cfm?ADFG=main.home>

Kodiak Island Area – Anne Marie La Rosa, Refuge Manager, - Kodiak NWR
(907) 487-2600/0230 AnneMarie_LaRosa@fws.gov or
Kevin Van Hatten (907) 487-0230 Kevin_VanHatten@fws.gov

Fishing effort to harvest salmon for subsistence purposes is low at this time. There have been multiple 10-day commercial salmon openings over the past 2-3 weeks. Many resident users are targeting bottom fish like halibut.

Report from an Old Harbor resident is that more than 80 subsistence Sockeye Salmon were harvested and distributed to elders by one gillnetter alone. Larsen Bay residents have finished harvesting the first run of Sockeye Salmon and intend to harvest again in late summer/early fall. Port Lions, Ouzinkie and Afognak natives have harvested much of their salmon.

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Kodiak Area
<http://alaska.fws.gov/asm/pdf/fishregs13/kodiak.pdf>

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Kodiak Area
<http://alaska.fws.gov/asm/pdf/fishregs13/kodiak.pdf>

Bristol Bay and Chignik – Johnathon Gerken Fisheries Branch Chief Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Field Office
(907) 271-2776 Jonathon_Gerken@fws.gov

Bristol Bay:

There are a number of regulation changes that were adopted or modified at the December 2015 and March 2016 BOF meetings that can be found here:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/applications/dcfnewsrelease/650190311.pdf>

For Bristol Bay, the forecast is for 46.6 million Sockeye Salmon, which is lower than the preseason forecast of 54 million for 2015. Most of the sustainable escapement goals (SEG) for Bristol Bay systems were recently revised to increase the upper ranges:

System	SEG
Ugashik	500,000 – 1,400,000
Egegik	800,000 – 2,000,000
Naknek	800,000 – 2,000,000
Wood River	800,000 – 1,800,000
Nushagak	370,000 – 900,000
Igushik	150,000 – 400,000

Harvestable surpluses are projected for all systems. ADF&G Commercial Fisheries Division has strategies in place for all mixed stock districts to address differential run strength should that occur. The salmon commercial fishing season opened by regulation on June 1. The following cumulative escapement and harvest numbers are current as of July 6. The Egegik District commercial fishery has a cumulative escapement of 786,000 and a commercial harvest of 3.0 million Sockeye Salmon. Commercial fishing openings are scheduled. The Ugashik District cumulative escapement is 233,000 with a cumulative harvest is 1.6 million Sockeye Salmon.

As of July 6, the Naknek River escapement is 641,000 and the Kvichak River escapement is 727,000 Sockeye Salmon. Commercial fishing openings are currently scheduled. As of July 7, the Nushagak River escapement is 480, 453 Sockeye Salmon and 114,458 Chinook Salmon. Commercial harvest for the Nushagak District is 3.8 million Sockeye Salmon. Commercial fishing with drift gillnets will close July 7 in the Nushagak Section. There are 396 drift gillnet permits for the Nushagak Section. Commercial fishing with set gillnets will open on July 8 in the Nushagak and Igushik Sections. The Wood River escapement is 712,485 and the Igushik River escapement is 70,854 Sockeye Salmon. Stock composition estimates for Bristol Bay Sockeye Salmon populations are based on 170 fish sampled at Port Moller. Prevalent stocks are Egegik (32.3%), Naknek (20.5%), and Ugashik (11.8%). Results for all stocks can be found here: http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishinggeneconservationlab.bbaysockeye_results.

Conservation measures are in place to conserve Chinook Salmon, including maximum mesh size restriction to 5 ½ inches in Naknek/Kvichak, and Ugashik districts. The Chinook Salmon return to Togiak is anticipated to be poor and reduced fishing time from scheduled periods is anticipated. Subsistence fishing in the commercial fishing district is open as of June 1 until further notice.

Gillnets are the primary gear used for most subsistence fishing for salmon. A permit is required for subsistence harvest of salmon for both the State and Federal subsistence fisheries.

Chignik:

Sockeye Salmon	Escapement Goal
Early Run – Black Lake	BEG = 350,000 – 450,000
Late Run – Chignik Lake	SEG = 200,000 – 400,000

Inriver Subsistence Goal	25,000 in August and 50,000 in September in addition to late run escapement goals
Chinook Salmon	BEG = 1,300 – 2,700
Pink Salmon – Even year	SEG = 170,000 – 280,000
Chum Salmon	SEG = 45,000 – 110,000

The 2016 total Sockeye Salmon forecast run for the Chignik River watershed is approximately 2,910,000 fish. Current escapement estimates through the Chignik weir are 356,896 Sockeye Salmon and 750 Chinook Salmon as of July 6. Approximately 2,190,000 Sockeye Salmon are expected to be harvested in Chignik Management Area. As of July 1, 2016 the commercial catch is estimated at 687,060 Sockeye Salmon, 3,693 Chinook Salmon, 30,916 Pink Salmon, and 41,230 Chum Salmon. Stock composition on the Sockeye Salmon escapement is 79.9% early run and 20.1% late run based on 156 fish. Commercial fishing periods started in the Chignik Bay, Central, and Eastern districts and the Inner Castle Cape Subsection of the Western District beginning June 4. Subsistence fishing is closed for salmon 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours following a commercial fishing period. The Western District of the Chignik Management Area opened to commercial fishing on June 16. Additional commercial fishing opportunities may occur during June and early July.

Fishing periods in the outer portions of these districts will depend on the Chignik River Sockeye Salmon interim escapement objectives being met as well as the strength of the local Pink and Chum Salmon runs. Beginning July 6 through August, inner bay fisheries may occur in the Western and Perryville districts to target Pink and Chum salmon. From the end of the transition period (approximately late-June through mid-July) until the end of the fishing season, ADF&G shall manage the CMA based on its evaluation of the local Pink O. gorbuscha, Chum O. keta, and Coho O. kisutch salmon runs, as well as the Chignik watershed late-run Sockeye Salmon escapement.

Alaska Peninsula:

There are numerous salmon stocks and fisheries throughout the Alaska Peninsula, as well as the Aleutian Islands. Several Sockeye Salmon escapements (mostly on the north peninsula) are monitored with weirs including Nelson, Bear, Sandy, Ilnik, McLees, and Orzinski rivers. Preseason forecasts are made for only the Nelson (692,000) and late-run Bear (424,000) river Sockeye Stocks. Commercial fishing opportunities have been announced for Nelson Lagoon, a portion of the Ilnik Section, a portion of the Three Hills Section, Port Moller Bight, Bear River Sections, and the outer Port Heiden Section.

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Bristol Bay Area

http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Bristol.pdf

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Chignik Area

http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/chignik.pdf

Southcentral Alaska Web Links

Federal Subsistence Management Fisheries News Releases

<http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/news/fishing/index.cfm>

ADF&G Sport and Personal Use Fishing News Release and Emergency Order link

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishingSportFishingInfo.R2>

ADF&G Commercial Fisheries News Release and Emergency Order Link

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>

Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Southcentral Alaska

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishingReports/index.cfm?ADFG=R2.Home>

Statewide ADF&G Fish counts:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/>

Yukon River – Gerald Maschmann, Fish Biologist USFWS Fairbanks Office.

Gerald_Maschmann@fws.gov or

Fred Bue Fredrick_Bue@fws.gov

Emmonak Summer Office (907) 949-1798

The Emmonak Field Office is closed for summer management activities and will reopen for fall season management in late July. For management questions call (907) 455-1849.

Summer Season Outlook and Management Strategies

The Yukon River summer season is winding down in the lower Yukon. Management will switch to fall season in District 1 on July 16. At this time, both the Chinook and Summer Chum Salmon runs appear to be winding down early as expected based on their early run timing. However, Chinook Salmon are just reaching the border and there is still a lot of season left in the upper Yukon. The 2016 Chinook Salmon current in-season run projection is for a run of approximately 175,000 Chinook Salmon. This is at the upper end of the pre-season outlook range of 130,000 to 175,000. This range is similar in size to the run observed in 2015 and has required subsistence harvest restrictions in order to meet minimum escapement objectives. As in recent years, initial management was based on the expectation that the 2016 Chinook Salmon run size would likely be near the lower end of this range. Management strategies have followed those agreed to during pre-season management meetings. Early subsistence fishing opportunities have targeted non-Chinook Salmon species, such as whitefish and Summer Chum Salmon. As the season progresses, fishing restrictions are being relaxed. The majority of the Chinook Salmon run has been protected to some extent with closures and restrictive fishing gear all the way upriver and into the spawning areas.

The Summer Chum Salmon run was projected to be average to above average and to provide for escapement and subsistence uses with a surplus of 450,000 to 950,000 anticipated to be available for commercial harvest. The Summer Chum Salmon run appears to have entered early and has exceeded the upper end of the pre-season outlook.

Public meetings were held throughout the winter and spring to inform fishers of the outlook. Management actions have been based on the pre-season outlook and are now based on in-season assessment as managers have gained confidence in the assessment information.

Assessment Information

Assessment projects began in the lower Yukon in late May. The Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF) has detected the early arriving, as well as the four pulses of Chinook and four pulses of Summer Chum Salmon. Operations at the Big Eddy 8.5-inch set net site were ended on June 30 to conserve Chinook Salmon. The cumulative CPUE for both Big Eddy and Middle Mouth 8.5 inch set net sites combined through June 30 is 33.94, which is above the historical average of 25.92. Operations at LYTF have been altered from previous years, so caution should be taken when comparing current catch rates to historical catch rates. The 8.25-inch drift gillnet test fishery for Chinook Salmon has been fully operational at the Big Eddy site since May 23. The cumulative CPUE as of July 8 is 545.07, which is above the historical average of 390.44. The 5.5-inch drift gill net test fisheries for Summer Chum Salmon at the Big Eddy and Middle Mouth sites have been fully operational since May 19 and June 4, respectively. The combined cumulative CPUE for both sites as of July 8 is 9,919.81 which is well above the historical median of 6,908.57 for this date. The Pilot Station sonar began full operations on June 1 and has detected the early arriving as well as the four pulses of Chinook and Summer Chum Salmon. The first pulse had an estimated 23,000 Chinook Salmon. The second pulse of Chinook Salmon began passing the Pilot Station sonar on June 15 and 16 with a three day passage of over 33,000 fish. The third pulse passed the sonar from June 20-25 with an estimated passage of 47,000 Chinook Salmon and the fourth pulse passed the sonar on June 27 with an estimated 5 day passage of 23,000. Cumulative passage estimates of Chinook Salmon past the Pilot Station sonar through July 8 is 163,980 fish, near the average of 168,792 fish, but below the early year average of 203,530 for this date. The passage estimates of Summer Chum Salmon past the Pilot Station sonar through July 8 is 1,610,731, near the average for this date of 1,371,896 fish. Information from the LYTF and Pilot Station sonar are in alignment and are performing as expected. The early trickle of Chinook Salmon is passing into Canada, pulse one and two are passing through Subdistrict 5-D and pulse three is passing through Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B and 5-C. Pulse four is in Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C. The Eagle sonar project started on July 1 and appears to be detecting the early trickle of Chinook Salmon. The first pulse is expected to be arriving on or around July 9. Subsistence harvest and fishing reports has been important information for managers when considering early season management actions.

Escapement projects have begun on the Andreafsky River, Gisasa River, Henshaw Creek, Chena River, and Salcha River. It is still early in the season for these projects but all are showing strong early returns consistent with the assessment projects on the lower Yukon. The East Fork Andreafsky River weir has passed a near average 1,604 Chinook Salmon and an above average 36,735 Summer Chum Salmon. The Anvik River sonar has estimated a near average Summer Chum Salmon passage with 199,000 fish. The Gisasa River weir has passed an above average 701 Chinook Salmon and a well above average 34,538 Summer Chum Salmon. The Henshaw Creek weir has passed a well above average 577 Chinook Salmon and 81,191 Summer Chum Salmon. Assessment at the Chena and Salcha Rivers has been hindered by high water.

Management Actions

Management of the 2016 was initiated very conservatively once again in an effort to assure adequate Chinook Salmon escapements are achieved due to uncertainty in assessment early in the season. Subsistence fishing for Chinook Salmon in Districts 1 through Subdistrict 5-C was closed when abundance just began to increase and fishing opportunity was provided with gear restrictions that required the immediate live release of all incidental Chinook Salmon. With public support, Subdistrict 5-D was allowed to fish on the early trickle of Chinook Salmon before the first pulse with 6-inch gillnets and fish wheels because it is widely known that the area has few alternative fish species available. However, like the other districts, 5-D was closed to protect both the first and second pulses of Chinook Salmon. The Innoko and Koyukuk rivers were not closed, but did have gillnet fishing gear restricted to no larger than 6-inch mesh because Chinook Salmon are not commonly harvested in those tributaries. Furthermore, District 6 remained on their standard schedule with gillnets restricted to 6-inch mesh because assessment indicated the Chinook Salmon escapement goals would be met in the Chena and Salcha rivers. Additionally, during subsistence Chinook Salmon fishing closures, gill nets with a mesh size 4-inches or smaller with a length of no more than 60 feet has been allowed to target non-salmon species.

When it was assessed that Chinook Salmon were demonstrating a run strength above escapement needs, recent actions were initiated relaxing subsistence fishing in sections of the river to allow some incidental Chinook Salmon harvest while targeting Chum Salmon. Subsistence salmon fishing with selective gear in Districts 1-4 and Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C has been closed and subsistence fishing with 6-inch or less mesh gillnet gear has been opened on half their regulatory schedule. The southern portion of the Coastal District and both the Innoko River and Koyukuk River drainages were relaxed back to their regulatory schedules of 24 hours per day, seven days per week with 7.5-inch or smaller gillnet gear. Opportunities to harvest Chinook Salmon with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear have been provided in Districts 2 through Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C. Subsistence fishing with gillnets with 7.5-inch or smaller mesh is being evaluated for Subdistrict 5-D. As the Chinook Salmon run is past the 90% point in the lower Yukon and assessing near the upper end of the pre-season outlook, subsistence salmon fishing is being relaxed to their normal subsistence fishing schedule starting in

the lower Yukon. Subsistence fishing is open 24/7 except closed 6 hours before and 6 hours after commercial fishing in Districts 1 and 2 with gillnets with 6-inch or smaller mesh gear. District 3 is open 24/7 with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear. District 4 and Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C will be returning to their normal 24/5 schedule with 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear as the tail end of the Chinook run passes through these districts. A short 12 hour subsistence salmon fishing period has been scheduled for Subdistrict 5-D with gillnets with 6-inch or smaller mesh gear.

Commercial fishing has been opened in Districts 1 and 2 with dipnets and beach seines targeting Summer Chum Salmon. Through July 8, there have been thirteen commercial openings targeting Summer Chum Salmon utilizing dipnets and beach seines in District 1, and eight in District 2. Preliminary harvests are 173,000 Summer Chum Salmon with 7,137 Chinook Salmon caught and released. Eight 4-6 hour, 5.5-inch or less mesh gillnet gear openings and two 6-inch or less mesh gillnet openings occurred in District 1 with a preliminary harvest of 125,000 Summer Chum and 2,426 Chinook Salmon incidentally harvested and retained for subsistence purposes. Five 4 hour, 6-inch or less mesh gillnet openings occurred in District 2, with a preliminary harvest of 80,263 Summer Chum Salmon and 2,123 Chinook Salmon incidentally harvested and retained for subsistence purposes. Managers anticipate additional gillnet gear openings for the rest of the season, depending on the incidental Chinook Salmon harvest.

Consultation

Extensive public outreach and consultation occurred during the fall of 2015 and spring of 2016 to inform and seek input from Yukon River fishermen and stakeholders. Run outlook and possible management strategies were discussed at Federal RAC meetings and State AC meetings, the Yukon River Panel meeting and at the annual Yukon River Drainage Fishermen's Association Board meeting. In April, a pre-season planning meeting was held in Anchorage that brought together representatives from most Alaskan Yukon River communities to discuss the run outlook and management options. Assessment and management actions were discussed on the fifth YRDFA teleconference on July 5. Alaska members of the Yukon River Panel, their alternates, and advisors (YAG) teleconferenced with State and Federal managers on June 22. Participants were brought up to date on current run assessment, mid-season run expectations, and summarized management actions to date. Management options and strategies were discussed with concerns and suggestions identified for management consideration.

Kuskokwim River – Ray Born, Refuge Manager, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Contact Vernon_Born@fws.gov; (907) 543-3151 or Lewis_Coggins@fws.gov

Summary:

Opening of Federal public waters of the Kuskokwim River to the Harvest of Chinook and Chum Salmon by Federally Qualified Subsistence Users.

In consultation with the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (KRITFC) and the State of Alaska, the Federal In-season Manager has opened Federal public waters of

the Kuskokwim River main-stem within the refuge boundary, to the harvest of Chinook and chum salmon, by Federally qualified subsistence users for 72 hours effective June 29, 2016 from 12:01 p.m. (noon) until 11:59 a.m. (noon) on July 2, 2016 from the Kuskokwim River mouth to the Kalskag Line. North of the Kalskag Line, harvest of Chinook and chum salmon by Federally qualified subsistence users will be allowed until changed by Federal Special Action.

Approved gear types will include drift and set gillnets with the following restrictions:

- 6-inch or less mesh;
- May not exceed 45 meshes in depth;
- May not exceed 25 fathoms (150 feet) in length above the Johnson River to the border of the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge at Aniak;
- May not exceed 50 fathoms (300 feet) below the Johnson River to the mouth of the Kuskokwim River.

These opportunities are based on the need to conserve a lower than average Chinook salmon run. While the Chinook run is expected to be smaller than average, managers feel that it is strong enough to allow a limited opportunity for a directed harvest for Federally qualified subsistence users. Please report your harvest to your KRITFC commissioner to ensure that salmon harvest needs are met now and in the future.

On June 1, the Federal Subsistence Board closed Federal public waters of the Kuskokwim River drainage to the harvest of Chinook and Chum salmon except by Federally qualified subsistence users identified in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, Section 804 Subsistence User Prioritization analysis. Federally qualified subsistence users include residents of the Kuskokwim River drainage and the villages of Chefornak, Kipnuk, Kwigillingok, and Kongiganek.

These limited opportunities have been implemented by Federal Emergency Special Actions (3-KS-05-16 and 3-KS-07-16) under the delegated authority of the Federal Subsistence Board.

Fishing effort and harvest data associated with this harvest opportunity are currently being tabulated by USFWS and the KRITFC to estimate Chinook harvest during the June 29-July 2 opportunity.

Closing of Kuskokwim River Tributaries to Gill Nets in Federal public waters

In consultation with the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (KRITFC) and the State of Alaska, the Federal In-season Manager has closed the salmon spawning tributaries of Federal public waters, within the Refuge boundary to gill net fishing. The salmon spawning tributaries include the Eek, Kwethluk, Kasigluk, Kisaralik, Tuluksak, and Aniak rivers and their salmon tributaries. The closure is in effect from June 12, 2016 at 12:01 p.m. (noon) until August 11, 2016 at 11:59 p.m. (noon) unless superseded by another federal special action.

This closure is based on the need to conserve Chinook salmon, which continue to return in low numbers.

Fisheries management below the Refuge boundary at the Kuskokwim River mouth and above the Refuge boundary on the Kuskokwim River at Aniak is under the authority of the State in-season manager. For more information regarding subsistence fishing in these areas, please contact the Alaska Department of Fish and Game at 907-543-2433.

This restriction has been implemented by Federal Emergency Special Action (3-KS-03-16) under the delegated authority of the Federal Subsistence Board.

Access up-to-date information on fishing opportunities by visiting the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/Yukon-Delta-National-Wildlife-Refuge-1039425076133926/>).

Test Fisheries:

As of June 30, the cumulative catch per unit of effort (CPUE) of Chinook Salmon at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's Bethel Test Fishery (BTF) is 496. Cumulative CPUE on this date during 2015 and 2014 were 431 and 579, respectively. The cumulative CPUE for Chum Salmon at the BTF as of June 30 was 760, compared to 694 and 2596 on this date in 2015 and 2014, respectively. The cumulative Sockeye Salmon CPUE at the BTF as of June 30 is 427, and was 713 and 585 on this date in 2015 and 2014, respectively. The cumulative Chinook, Chum, and Sockeye Salmon CPUE at the Aniak Test Fishery on June 30 were respectively 1966, 1309, and 26 as compared to 2251, 944, and 160 on this date in 2015.

2016 Chum Salmon Run:

The 2016 Chum Salmon run appears to be similar in size and timing to the 2015 run, which reached the escapement goal at the Kogrugluk River despite being substantially smaller than the historical average. Observed subsistence fishing effort during the current harvest opportunity appears to be less than 25% of the effort observed during first opportunity this year on June 12. This steep decrease in effort demonstrates a large decline in subsistence fishing effort throughout the Refuge. Preliminary 2016 harvest estimates for Chum Salmon are already close to half of the preliminary 2015 Chum Salmon harvest estimates. Alaska Department of Fish and Game has stated that they are not currently anticipating the commercial harvest of Chum Salmon in the Kuskokwim River in 2016.

Yukon-Kuskokwim-Interior Alaska Web Links

Federal Subsistence Management Fisheries News Releases:

<http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/news/fishing/index.cfm>

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Yukon–Northern Area

http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Yukon.pdf

NEW = Kuskokwim River Updates Hosted on OSM Website

<http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/kuskokwim.cfm>

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Kuskokwim Area

http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Kusko.pdf

ADF&G Sport and Personal Use Fishing News Release and Emergency Order link:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/EONR/index.cfm?ADFG=region.R3>

ADF&G Commercial Fisheries News Release and Emergency Order Link:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>

Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Interior Alaska:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishingReports/index.cfm?ADFG=R3.home>

Statewide ADF&G Fish counts:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/>

Northwest Alaska – Ken Adkisson, National Park Service, Nome.

(907) 443-2522 Ken_Adkisson@nps.gov

Norton Sound District

Sport Fishing: The harvest restrictions for Chinook salmon in the Unalakleet River drainage and the Shaktoolik River drainage will remain in place through August 15, 2016 unless superseded by subsequent emergency order.

Unalakleet (Subdistrict 6)

The Federal public waters of the Unalakleet River upstream from the Chirosky River remain closed until July 31 to the taking of Chinook salmon by Federal subsistence regulation. This closure affects all users.

Commercial Fishing: In the first opening late last week (July 1-July 2), 14 permit holders caught 32 sockeyes, 3,100 pinks and 3999 chums. Chinook salmon could not be sold and 11 were retained for personal use. Additional commercial openings of two 12 hour periods were provided from 12 noon until 12 midnight on July 6 and July 7. Commercial openings of two 8 hour periods were also provided from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. on July 9 and 10.

Subsistence Fishing: Beginning July 1, the subdistrict was placed on a subsistence fishing schedule of two 36- hour fishing periods a week in the marine waters of the subdistrict from 8 a.m. Monday until 8 p.m. Tuesday, and from 8 a.m. Friday until 8 p.m. Saturday.

Gillnets were restricted to 6 inches or less mesh size and 50 fathoms in length, An additional subsistence gillnet fishing period for the marine waters was provided for a 24 hour period from 8 a.m. Wednesday, July 6 until 8 a.m. Thursday, July 7 with no mesh size restriction but with a length of 50 fathoms, Beginning July 1, the Unalakleet River drainage was placed on a schedule of as two 36-hour fishing periods a week from 8 a.m. Monday until 8 p.m. Tuesday, and from 8 a.m. Friday until 8 p.m. Saturday. Gillnets and beach seines are restricted to 4 ½ inches or less mesh size. Any king salmon captured in beach seines must be immediately returned to the water unharmed, Effective Saturday, July 9, the Unalakleet River drainages were opened to beach seining through August 10. Beach seines are required to have a mesh size of 4 ½ inches or less. Any Chinook salmon captured must be immediately returned to the water.

North River Tower – Camp J.B. - A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game has escapement goals of 1,200-2,600 kings; 25,000 pinks; 550-1,100 silvers (aerial survey); and no goal yet established for chums. The cumulative counts through July 3 were 114 kings, 3,000 chums and 76,000 pinks. For that date, the king count was average, the chum count was the second highest in the 21 year project history and the pink count is the best since 2006.

Unalakleet River Floating Weir – A cooperative project of Fish & Game, Native Village of Unalakleet, United States BLM and NSEDC with major funding provided by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management. There are no weir escapement goals yet. The cumulative counts through July 3 were 220 kings, 12,000 chums and 560,000 pinks. All the salmon counts were the highest for the same date in the seven year history of the project. Pink counts were running over 100,000 a day at the beginning of July.

Shaktoolik (Subdistrict 5)

Commercial Fishing: In the first opening late last week (July 1-July 2), 14 permit holders caught 32 sockeyes, 3,100 pinks and 3999 chums. Chinook salmon could not be sold and 11 were retained for personal use. Two commercial openings of 12 hour periods were provided from 12 noon until 12 midnight on July 6 and July 7, Commercial openings of 8 hour periods were also provided from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. on July 9 and 10.

Subsistence Fishing: Beginning July 1, the subdistrict was placed on a subsistence fishing schedule of two 36- hour fishing periods a week in the marine waters of the subdistrict from 8 a.m. Monday until 8 p.m. Tuesday, and from 8 a.m. Friday until 8 p.m. Saturday. There were no mesh size restrictions in the marine waters. Gillnets were restricted to 6 inches or less mesh size and 50 fathoms in length, The Shaktoolik River drainage has two 36-hour fishing periods a week from 8 a.m. Monday until 8 p.m. Tuesday, and from 8 a.m. Friday until 8 p.m. Saturday. Gillnets and beach seines are restricted to 4 ½ inches or less mesh size. Any Chinook salmon captured in beach seines must be immediately returned to the water unharmed. Effective Saturday, July 9, the Shaktoolik River drainages were opened to beach seining through August 10. Beach seines are required to

have a mesh size of 4 ½ inches or less. Any Chinook salmon captured must be immediately returned to the water.

Shaktoolik Tower – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game has no escapement goals yet established. Cumulative counts through July 2 were 213 kings, 6,200 chums and 105,000 pinks. The tower has only been in operation for three years. The king and chum counts are in the middle compared to the higher counts in 2014 and the lower counts in 2015. The pink count is over 5 times the previous high count in 2014.

Norton Bay (Subdistrict 4)

Commercial Fishing: Commercial salmon fishing opened in the subdistrict for 16 hour periods from 8 a.m. until midnight on July 2, 3 and 4. Commercial fishing reopened for 16 hour periods from 8 a.m. until midnight from July 5 through July 8. The commercial fishing schedule provides for no fishing on Wednesday, July 6, followed by a daily fishing schedule from 8 a.m. to midnight with gillnets restricted to 6 inches or less mesh size and 100 fathoms in length. Commercial fishing reopened for 16 hour periods from 8 a.m. until 12 midnight on Saturday, July 9 through Monday, July 11. The commercial catch to July 3 was 20 kings, 75 sockeyes, 3,000 pinks and 2,200 chums by 19 permit holders.

Subsistence Fishing: Subsistence fishing is open seven days a week with no mesh size restrictions and gillnets limited to 50 fathoms in length.

Inglutalik River Tower – A cooperative project of NSEDC and ADF&G. No escapement goals have been established. Cumulative counts to through July 3 were 2,175 kings, 16,000 chums and 1,400 pinks. For that date all salmon counts are second in the six year project history.

Elim (Subdistrict 3)

Commercial Fishing: Commercial salmon fishing opened in the subdistrict for 16 hour periods from 8 a.m. until midnight on July 2, 3 and 4. Commercial fishing reopened for 16 hour periods from 8 a.m. until midnight from July 5 through July 8. The commercial fishing schedule provides for no fishing on Thursday, July 7, followed by a daily fishing schedule from 8 a.m. to midnight with gillnets restricted to 6 inches or less mesh size and 100 fathoms in length. Commercial fishing reopened for 16 hour periods from 8 a.m. until 12 midnight on Saturday, July 9 through Monday, July 11. The commercial catch to July 3 was 20 kings, 75 sockeyes, 3,000 pinks and 2,200 chums by 19 permit holders.

Subsistence Fishing: Subsistence fishing is open seven days a week with no mesh size restrictions and gillnets limited to 50 fathoms in length.

Kwiniuk River Tower – A Fish & Game project with assistance from NSEDC has escapement goals of 250 kings; 11,500 – 23,000 chums; 8,400 pinks; and 650-1,300 silvers (aerial survey goal). Cumulative counts through July 3 were 69 kings, 5,200 chums and 71,000 pinks. The king and chum counts are near the historical average for the same date. Pinks could crack the one million mark for the first time since 2008.

Golovin (Subdistrict 2)

Commercial Fishing: Commercial salmon fishing opened in the subdistrict for 16 hour periods from 8 a.m. until midnight on July 2, 3 and 4. Commercial fishing reopened for 16 hour periods from 8 a.m. until midnight from July 5 through July 8. The commercial fishing schedule provides for no fishing on Tuesday, July 5, followed by a daily fishing schedule from 8 a.m. to midnight with gillnets restricted to 6 inches or less mesh size and 100 fathoms in length, Commercial fishing reopened for 16 hour periods from 8 a.m. until 12 midnight on Saturday, July 9 through Monday, July 11. The commercial catch to July 3 was 7 kings, 80 sockeyes, 4,000 pinks and 3,400 chums by 8 permit holders.

Subsistence Fishing: Subsistence fishing is open seven days a week with no mesh size restrictions and gillnets limited to 50 fathoms in length.

Fish River Tower - A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game. No escapement goals have been established. Cumulative counts through July 3 were 600 kings, 36,000 chums and 60,000 pinks. This is the third year of the project. For that date, the king count is two-thirds last year's count; the chum count is nearly double last year's count; and the pink count is over 10 times the count of the even- year run in 2014..

Nome (Subdistrict 1)

Commercial Fishing: Commercial salmon fishing opened in the Nome subdistrict for 24 hours from 6 p.m. Saturday, July 9 until 6 p.m. Sunday, July 10.

Subsistence Fishing: The subsistence net fishing schedule is from 6 p.m. Wednesday until 6 p.m. Monday in the marine waters West of Cape Nome and all the freshwater subsistence areas. East of Cape known, the marine waters are open seven days a week. There are no catch limits when fishing a marine waters. Catch limits in the freshwaters vary by river, and the limits can be found on the back of the subsistence permits. Beach seines, cast nets and dip nets can be used during the net fishing schedule, but only in the subsistence areas.

Solomon River Weir – A Fish & Game project, has no escapement goals yet established. The cumulative counts through July 3 were 8 chums. This is the earliest chum passage in the four year project history.

Eldorado River Weir – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game has an escapement goal of 6,000 – 9,200 chum salmon. Cumulative counts through

July 3 were 1 king, 5,175 chums and 300 pinks. The chum count is the highest in the 20-year project history.

Nome River Weir – A Fish & Game project with assistance from NSEDC has an escapement goal of 2,900 – 4,300 chum salmon and 13,000 pink salmon. The cumulative counts through July 3 were 150 chums, 1,000 pinks and 3 sockeyes. For that date, the chum count was the second highest in 29 years.

Snake River Weir – A cooperative project between Fish & Game and NSEDC has an escapement goal of 1,600 – 2,500 chum salmon. The cumulative counts through July 3 were 94 chums, and 19 pinks. For that date, the chum count was the second highest in 20 years,

Port Clarence District

Subsistence gillnet and beach staining is open seven days a week. The Pilgrim River has required subsistence permits since 1964. There have re been 281 Pilgrim River subsistence permits issued so far this year. This would have been a record prior to 2015. Last year there were 377 permits issued, and a record subsistence harvest of 10,700 sockeyes. The previous record was 5,600 sockeyes harvested in 2006.

Pilgrim River Weir –A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game has an escapement goal of 4,000 – 8,000 sockeyes based on aerial survey at Salmon Lake & Grand Central tributary to Salmon Lake. The cumulative counts through July 3 were 1 king, 1,400 chums, 56 pinks, and 2,500 sockeyes. The sockeye count is the highest for the same date in over 10 years. Only 2004 and 2005 had more sockeye past the weir by the same date.

Kotzebue District

One buyer has notified the ADF&G that they intend to buy again this year. The first commercial fishing opening for this season is expected to be July 10.

Kobuk River Test Fish - Fish & Game project. The project is scheduled to start the third week of July.

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for the Kotzebue Area
<http://alaska.fws.gov/asm/pdf/fishregs11/norton.pdf>